

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Enfield 1

JOHN DELANEY, rated as a major threat by Enfield manager Howard Moxon, fully justified his dangerman tag by heading Wycombe Wanderers into a sensational two-goal half-time lead over the Amateur Cup holders in Saturday's second round classic at Loakes Park.

Wycombe's skipper had spent the week racing fate to be fit after sustaining a leg injury playing for the Olympic squad versus an Irish F.A. XI in Belfast.

But it proved all worthwhile. For this was Delaney's match. In defence he made a stern general; in attack he menaced Enfield with his extra height — the factor which ultimately swung the tie Wycombe's way.

Saturday's moment of destiny came after 39 minutes. Referee Ken Burns awarded a penalty against the Blues and, in the process, seemingly handed Enfield their ticket into Monday's third round draw on a silver platter.

But John Maskell had different ideas, cutting out Chris Duggan's spot kick to renew Wanderers' trophy hopes. Temporarily deflated by their disappointment, Enfield were perfect prey for the keen eyed Delaney, who struck twice in minutes and opened the Wembley trail once more.

Ironically, before that penalty decision — a dubious affair in itself — the visitors had claimed fractionally the better of things. Their pre-match confidence flowed over onto the pitch at kick-off and they surprised a thickly-packed crowd by taking up the running.

Not that that deterred Wycombe in any way. They too played it tight, while still retaining their flair and positive approach.

And with both sides in attacking mood, not even a pitch soaked by a freak early afternoon snowstorm and becoming progressively churned up, could stop the game living up to expectations as the clash of the round.

For all the doubts and uncertainties over injured players in the rival camps beforehand, there was good news all round on match day. Both Delaney and Tony Horseman passed late fitness tests for Wycombe while question marks hanging around Moxon's team selection also vanished.

One surprise did greet Wycombe fans however, with the inclusion of Ian Rundle at the expense of Vince Faulkner who sat out the afternoon as substitute.

The tactical switch looked a failure until iron-man Rundle fell in with the pace of play after half-time. Then the hard, uncompromising Rundle got to grips with his role.

Enfield gave notice of their intentions by naming defender Len Pryor as number 12 instead of striker Roy Cutler, who along with senior squad colleagues, Sid Hill and Alan Wakeling came to Wycombe purely for the ride.

Moxon's reasoning was clear. Force Wanderers back for 45 minutes, then close up ranks — even if only to assure a replay at Southbury Road.

It seemed sound thinking until that fateful penalty miss turned the tie 180 degrees to save Wanderers from the brink of disaster.

Enfield meant business, not only upfront, but also in defence where they were giving nothing — BUT NOTHING — away. Brian Moffatt one of their many internationals, kept a close, oft-times physical check on Johnny Hutchinson without ever suppressing the Wycombe striker to any serious degree.

Meanwhile Keith Searle and Enfield's Micky Smith renewed their rivalry with the usual verdict — Smith winning on points.

Man-for-man marking and packed penalty areas for the spaces created excitement throughout, and brought Maskell and his counterpart Andy Williams into more action than either had seen for months.

With Wycombe managing work within closer shooting range, Williams livened proceedings even further by pulling off some spectacular goalkeeping saves.

One of Maskell's major wo-

By Mike Whitesman

ries was Enfield's roving jack-of-all-trades Tony Gibson, who flashed a 22nd minute shot inches high of the bar from 25 yards out.

The in-form Tony Turley, big enough to gain advantage from the heavy ground, and Ken Gray, the opponent Delaney had labelled as Enfield's one to watch, carried the visitors' threat to the Blues' firm back row.

An early leg injury to Paul Fuschillo, effected the full-back's performance noticeably but failed to upset the Blues' defensive rhythm.

Following play around energetically, Gibson intervened to concede a corner by robbing Larry Pritchard of a possible scoring chance near goal. Delaney foraged upfield at every excuse, and almost headed his side into a lead when Horseman returned his cleared corner into the centre.

There was neither room to move nor time to relax as players continually fought for everything, transforming Loakes Park into the most pressurised space since the cabin of Apollo 12.

Williams flung himself to one side to foil Searle as he shot after moving clear to the right of the visitors' net in the 29th minute. And two minutes later, a long cross off the left by Bremer found Delaney for yet another header, again thwarted by the cat-like Williams.

Referee Burns, seven days earlier in charge of the Chelsea-Manchester City F.A. Cup tie, generally kept control of affairs well. But he missed what looked a certain offside in the 39th minute as Duggan broke clear.

Thereafter, the crunch. Delaney raced back to kneec-

Duggan's kick off an empty line, but Mr. Burns had already picked up an infringement in the area and, despite protests, adamantly pointed to the spot.

Wycombe gloom set in, but lifted again, seconds later as Maskell gambled correctly by diving to his left to clutch Duggan's penalty shot to safety.

Enter Delaney, the highest scoring centre-half in amateur football today, to outjump a ruck of players in the Enfield "box" and head in a 40th minute cross from Great Britain colleague Ted Powell.

Another four minutes and the Wanderers' hero overshadowed all else with a glorious second goal, again headed, but this time on the run as a Horseman corner whizzed across to the far post. Delaney leapt feet higher than anyone to earn himself the tag of amateur soccer's Tony Hateley from the national press.

Within seconds it was half-time, and Loakes Park rose to the giant centre-half and his men.

The turnabout in fortunes was sudden enough to sap any side's morale, yet Enfield showed far more fight than could have been expected from them in the second half.

Turley, signed only recently from St. Albans, pounded the ball over Wycombe's crossbar almost immediately. But, although Horseman grafted hard with little of his usual confidence, both Bremer and Hutchinson working especially well on the left, found the gaps in which to pile pressure on Enfield's defence.

The holders weren't going to let their trophy go without a struggle. But, under the circumstances they could be forgiven occasional attacks of the fidgets when Delaney moved up for action.

Those fidgets grew close to screaming haddabs in the 60th minute when John forced a corner out of a free-kick and then went within centimetres of a hat-trick in heading Horseman's ensuing centre just over the bar.

Powell, tirelessly patrolling man's land, soon looked set for a certain score as he raced through, but kicked the ball across the goalface.

Entering the last quarter, visitors again stepped up their efforts, and only Keith Blunt cutting out a dangerous raid Gray, delayed them.

Maskell uneasily pushed another pot-shot by Turley over the bar after 77 minutes. Five minutes later, the keeper failed to hold the ball as it rolled along his mud-packed goalmouth and Gray moved in to make it 1.

The stadium hushed in shocked daze, and within ten minutes, thousands of Wycombe supporters skipped heartbeat apiece as Maskell skated off his line to block Gray from shooting home a late equaliser.

Resuming control once more, Wanderers confidently played out time from there on emerge on Saturday evening clear favourites to lift the trophy they last won in 1931.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; Fuschillo, K. Blunt, E. Powell, Delaney, I. Rundle, B. Bremer, Hutchinson, K. Searle, L. Pritchard, A. Horseman. Sub.: V. Faulkner (not used).

ENFIELD: A. Williams; L. Tilt, M. Moffatt, J. Payne, P. Betson, Smith, C. Duggan, A. Gibson, Brooks, K. Gray, A. Turley. Sub.: Pryor.

Referee: Mr. K. Burns (Stonbridge).

Official attendance: 6,183. Half-time: 2-0. Goalscorers: Wycombe—Delaney 2 (40, 44); Enfield—Gray (82).